

EXHIBIT A



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deputy Supervisor, Eric Hofmeister, Town of Islip
Councilman Anthony Senft, Town of Islip (and Town liaison to the Parks
Department)

FROM: New York Communities for Change
Make the Road New York

DATE: May 14, 2014

SUBJECT: Toxic Dumping in Roberto Clemente Park and Additional Sites

As membership-based community organizations working in Brentwood and Central Islip, we write on behalf of local residents to share our grave concerns regarding the toxic dumping at Roberto Clemente Park in Brentwood and other nearby sites and to communicate our recommendations for addressing this tragic situation and the systematic neglect that preceded it.

Background

Beginning on May 6th, residents of Brentwood and Central Islip have been shocked by the revelations that asbestos-ridden waste has been dumped in Roberto Clemente Park and other nearby sites. Community members have experienced a range of reactions, including grave concerns regarding: 1) environmental impact, 2) public health consequences, and 3) where children and families will be able to recreate this summer. Below, we offer our recommendations for addressing these concerns, but we first outline how the illegal dumping uncovered by the District Attorney's investigation is part of a broader pattern of neglect of our communities that began well before the most recent incident.

Following Superstorm Sandy, the Town of Islip announced that the pool in Roberto Clemente Park would be closed. Residents were gravely concerned, particularly given that the closure was disparately impacting communities of color, while other areas of the Town retained their facilities. NYCC and its allies collected petitions from concerned residents, and the Town responded by offering to send youth by bus to a pool in West Islip. This proved to be an inadequate solution that did not serve residents. Moreover, the Town abruptly stopped offering the limited service. The Town refused to explain why Roberto Clemente Park would not be repaired, and after further community petitioning efforts to meet with then-Commissioner Joseph Montouri, the Town remained vague and noncommittal.

At the end of the summer of 2013, the Town announced funding available for the reopening the pool in June 2014, and the Town agreed to a community forum at the Brentwood library in early spring 2014. Meanwhile, NYCC uncovered neglect of other nearby parks, including Lowell Avenue Park in Central Islip, which had become an unsafe center where people congregated to consume alcohol and drugs. After roughly 200 residents signed a petition demanding the Town make their local park safe, Town officials refused to participate in the forum within 48 hours of the event.



Throughout these past two years, the Town's inaction has left residents continually disappointed that the Town has made no significant effort to repair the parks and allow our communities to enjoy adequate recreational facilities.

The most shocking event of all, of course, came on May 6th, when community members learned that the District Attorney's office was investigating illegal dumping in Roberto Clemente Park. Our members are absolutely appalled at the discovery of toxic chemicals being dumped in our neighborhoods under the Town's supervision. We fear not only for the health and environment of our communities, but also that for the second consecutive summer communities will not have clean parks to enjoy in their neighborhoods.

Recommendations

We demand that the Town take immediate action to address 1) the environmental crisis in Roberto Clemente Park and the other nearby sites, 2) the systematic neglect of our community parks, and 3) provide safe and convenient summer programming for our communities' youth. The Town's actions should include, but not be limited to, the following steps:

1. The Town must take every possible action to promptly clean up the asbestos-ridden waste in Roberto Clemente Park and all other dumping sites and address all environmental and public health consequences.
2. The Town must allocate its programmatic funds to operate summer programs at Roberto Clemente Park (and any other affected parks) to local agencies with a strong track record of summer youth programming to provide services at no cost to all young people in all affected areas. The Town shall work with local institutions, including the Brentwood and Central Islip Union Free School Districts, Suffolk County Community College (Brentwood), and the New York Institute of Technology (Central Islip). We understand that Legislator Martinez has presented this idea to you, and we fully support her proposal.
3. The Town must immediately clean up and repair all nearby parks to ensure that local residents have access to green space. First priority should go to parks closest to Roberto Clemente Park, including, but not limited to:
 - ∞ Noble Street Park (Brentwood);
 - ∞ Michael Cacciuttolo Park (Brentwood); and
 - ∞ Lowell Avenue Park (Central Islip).
4. Undertake aggressive efforts to inform local residents of progress on each of these critical issues, via door-to-door canvassing, mailings, and print and social media in all languages spoken by local residents, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

We recommend these actions as critical first steps that the Town of Islip should take to 1) respond to the recent devastation in our community and 2) address the systematic neglect of our communities' recreational facilities.

CC: Legislator Mónica Martínez, Suffolk County Legislature